

RISEING SUN TAVERN
FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA
Spotsylvania Co.

HABS NO. 11-1

HABS
VA
89-FRED,
4-

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
DISTRICT NO. 11

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
PHILIP M. STERN, DISTRICT OFFICER
21 LAW BLDG. FREDERICKSBURG, VIRGINIA

HABS

VA.

83. F&A

4

RIISING SUN TAVERN
Fredericksburg
Spotsylvania County
Virginia

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Owners: Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

Date of Erection: After 1761.

Architect and Builder: No record.

Present Condition: Good.

Number of Stories: One and a half, and cellar.

Materials of Construction: Wood; brick and stone foundation.

Other Existing Records: See text.¹

Additional Data: See following pages.

¹ White Pine Series of Architectural Monographs, volume 2, number 1,
page 50.

Ware, W.R., Georgian Period, volume 1, page 82.

Lancaster, R.A., Jr., Historic Virginia Homes and Churches, 300.

HISTORICAL DATA

The Rising Sun Tavern occupies a portion of the original lot 87 on the west side of Caroline Street, between Fauquier and Hawke Streets.

The following information is furnished by George A. Palmer, Historic Technician, Fredericksburg National Military Park:

Deed Book "E", page 877, recorded at Spot-sylvania Courthouse, and dated August 3, 1761, states: "The trustees and directors of the town of Fredericksburg, which have been granted the authority by King George II, to enlarge the town of Fredericksburg by laying off additional lands into streets and lots as they think best and whereas the adjacent land in the upper part of the ~~town~~ has been laid off into said lots, and Warner Lewis has legally obtained the same, do hereby agree to sell to Charles Washington, lots no. 87 and 88 for the sum of eighty pounds". On October 6, 1786 Charles Washington, in consideration of love and affection, deeded lots #87 and 88 to his son George A. Washington. Deed Book "A", page 315. In 1787 the building was occupied by John Lewis.

On July 6, 1791 George A. Washington sold these lots to Larkin Smith. Deed Book "B" page 291. For the sum of 700 pounds in Virginia currency, for the buildings and improvements.

On April 28, 1792 Larkin Smith sold these lots to Gus B. Wallace. Deed Book "B", page 314. 700 pounds.

On April 1, 1793 Gus B. Wallace sold lots #87 and 88 to Robert Patton. Deed book "A" page 404.

The house at this time was occupied by John Frazier as a tavern, and purchased by G. B. Wallace of John Lewis.

In 1792 it was known as the Eagle Tavern but was not occupied. See Land Tax Book, 1782 to 1808, Fredericksburg, Court Records.

This Charles Washington was a brother of George Washington.

It would appear that there were no buildings on these lots at the time Charles Washington bought this property, so that the present Rising Sun Tavern must have been built after 1761.

According to tradition the Tavern was run by General George Weedon, who was the third Postmaster General of the United States and the north room on the first floor was used as a Post Office

and, as General Weedon issued an order that the mail should leave the Post Office daily at sunrise, it became known as "The Rising Sun Tavern".

According to the Virginia Gazette, published in Williamsburg in 1776, a certain William Smith opened the Tavern after the occupancy of General Weedon.

The Tavern was the first meeting place of such patriots as Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, James Monroe, George Washington, Hugh Mercer, George Mason, the Lees and other noted men. It was here the men of Fredericksburg and vicinity, who had armed to defend their country after the Governor, Lord Dunmore, had secretly removed the barrels of gun powder from the public magazine in Williamsburg, agreed to disperse, after adopting a resolution bitterly denouncing Dunmore's action and declaring without fear or evasion, that the troops would preserve their liberty at the hazard of their lives and fortunes, concluding with the significant words, "God save the liberties of America". This was on April 29, 1775, twenty one days prior to the celebrated Mecklenburg Declaration and more than one year before the great Declaration of Independence, July 4, 1776.

References: Quinn's History of Fredericksburg,
Howison's History of Virginia and Forces' Archives,
quoted in Wm. & Mary Quarterly, of October 1909.

It was here, too, that James Madison, in consultation with Thomas Jefferson, James Monroe, George Weedon and Edmund Pendleton framed the amendment to the Constitution containing the Freedom of Religion clause. This meeting was held in the Banquet Room and authority for it is supported by similar statements by Judge Alvin T. Embrey and published historical notes.

In this same room the Society of Cincinnati held its first meeting in Virginia, presided over by George Weedon. The names of the members attending are registered in the Tavern Register, which bears authority for this statement:

Lafayette and his staff of French and American Officers visited the Tavern November 11, 1781, enroute from Yorktown to Philadelphia. In December 1824, Lafayette again visited Fredericksburg and was given a ball at the Tavern. Just preceding this second visit the Marquis de Lafayette made his reservation by request, writing "Save, for me, my north room".

In 1907 the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities bought the property from Judge A. W. Wallace, whose family had owned it since 1792.

In 1929 the building was repaired and restored to its original condition by Philip N. Stern, architect.

Philip N. Stern

Reviewed 1936, Lt. C. F.

ADDENDUM
FOLLOWS...

Addendum to
Rising Sun Tavern
1306 Caroline Street
Fredericksburg
Virginia

HABS No. VA-11-1

HABS
VA,
89-FRED,
4-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240